



U.S. EMBASSY, YAOUNDÉ, CAMEROON

PRESS RELEASE



U.S. Government Launches Human Rights and Conservation Curriculum for Central Africa

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) launched a new human rights and conservation curriculum at Garoua Wildlife College in Cameroon. This technical and college-level curriculum, which will roll out this year, reflects the growing concern in Central Africa—as elsewhere—that for conservation efforts in protected areas to be successful, they must reflect the interests and needs of indigenous communities. However, tensions and violent conflicts over sovereignty, rights, and resources are not uncommon.

Developed with the guidance of a leading anthropologist and input and review from a range of Central African and international interdisciplinary experts and on-the-ground practitioners, the new curriculum aims to educate existing and future conservation practitioners on the importance of protecting human rights. It focuses on complex issues about conservation practices and carefully considers the context in which conservation practitioners work.

The new curriculum, which is the product of a close collaboration between USFWS and USFS programs in Central Africa, is made possible due to the generous support of the American people through USAID's Central African Regional Program for the Environment. By combining technical expertise, resources, and respective longstanding partnerships, USFWS, USFS, and USAID aim to extend the reach and impact of the curriculum so it can inform future practitioners on the ground—those who work to promote conservation in Central

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Africa—that they also need to protect the rights and livelihoods of their fellow citizens.

Since 2011, USFWS and Garoua Wildlife College have worked together to integrate emerging wildlife conservation issues into the college curriculum. This new human rights curriculum is the result of a multi-year, collaborative process between USFWS, faculty from Garoua, and IPRC-Kitabi College in Rwanda. Through USFS support, faculty from both institutions collaborated with Central African colleagues during a training on the Free Prior and Informed Consent Process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2020. In addition, USFS also helped design a human rights higher education teaching module, which was carried out in partnership with the Forest Peoples Program.

After its initial rollout, the new module on human rights and conservation will be available for use at all higher education institutions in the Network of Forestry and Environmental Training Institutions of Central Africa (RIFFEAC).

In partnership with RIFFEAC, USFS previously launched other teaching modules based on sustainable resource guides developed with and validated by the Central Africa Forest Commission. These modules—focused on community-based natural resource management, extractive resource zone management, integrated landscape land use, and protected area management—have been adopted by academic institutions in the region, including the Regional Training Center Specialized in Agriculture at the University of Dschang.

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit www.fws.gov, or connect with us through any of these social media channels: Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube.

U.S. Forest Service programs in Africa and the Middle East deliver high-quality natural resource management activities to improve lives, landscapes, and biodiversity in the region. Through strong, long-term partnerships with dedicated organizations, USFS has provided direct, on-the-ground technical support and exchange opportunities in countries across the region for over 20 years. The U.S. Forest Service receives support from the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation. To learn more about our work in Central Africa, please visit usfscentralafrica.org or connect with us on Facebook.

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